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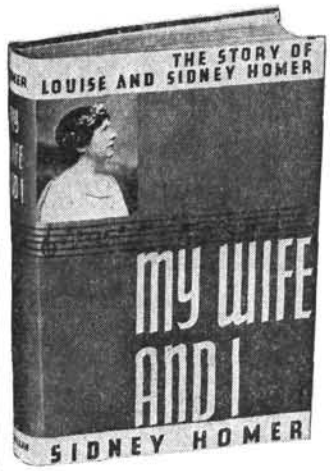

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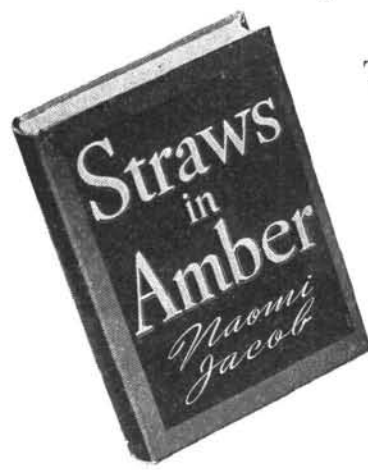
By Naomi Jacob



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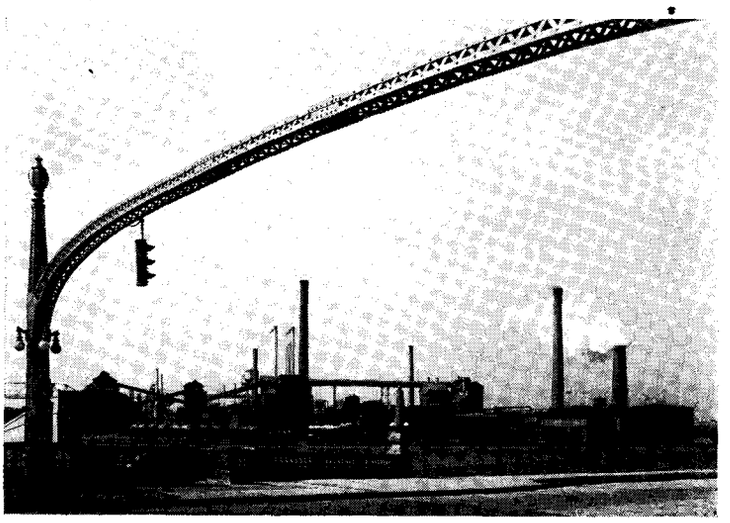
Authors and Wolverines

The Books and Writers of Michigan

BY ARNOLD MULDER



Ford factory, Dearborn, Michigan: "Michigan has put the world on wheels; Michigan novelists are still jogging along in one-hoss shays"...

MICHIGAN summer resort executives have started an agitation to change the nickname of our "pleasant peninsula" from "The Wolverine State" to—almost anything else would be preferred. The wolverine is not native to Michigan, and the dictionary describes him as "wary, voracious," and a "skunk bear." In almost the same breath the resort men are claiming for Michigan numerous celebrated authors, because the author has become as much of an advertising asset as the wolverine is supposed to be a liability; garishly colored booklets tell us that "Michigan is in the forefront of the hierarchy of states whose literary stars make the country resound with their genius." But sober honesty compels the admission that Authors—upper case Authors—are about as rare in Michigan as the "skunk bear" ever was and that the flowering of literary Michigan is still in the future.

We had one slim chance somewhat more than a quarter of a century ago when Ring Lardner had just finished a career of throwing spit-wads in the schoolroom of the little town of Niles. But Michigan had only recently started making Ford cars in real earnest and we couldn't bother with a mere literary clown. At one time also, toward the end of the last century, Edna Ferber had done the state the honor of being born in the not quite so little town of Kalamazoo, now famous because it is America's only city of 50,000 that is debt-free. But Miss Ferber appears to have had so little regard for the needs of future resort rhapsodists that she left the state in early childhood.

No historian of the state's fiction who is truly animated by the spirit of "scholarly research" fails to mention that Henry Rowe Schoolcraft's "Algic Researches," published exactly one hundred years ago, furnished the raw material for Longfellow's "Hiawatha"; or that James Fenimore Cooper lived in Michigan for a while and laid the scene of "Oak Openings" here. We began to be literary very early in our history, and throughout the state's century of life our output has been fairly large in bulk, but we have been curiously lacking in geniuses or masterpieces. One reason may be that our history has been deficient in those dramatic crises that stir the pulses of native writers. Michigan never was a battleground in any of America's major wars; at best war merely nibbled at our edges a few times, at Sault Ste. Marie and at Fort Dearborn, Detroit.

There was one exception—and the novelists have overlooked its possibilities. Michigan once fought a war of its own—not a mere battle but a whole war, involving an army, an invasion of Ohio, attacks, ultimatums, victories, a treaty, and everything else that is essential for the stage properties of any self-respecting war. It even has a name in history—the "Toledo War."

While Michigan's admission to the Union was pending in Congress, Ohio took over a sudeten land along its northern border from five to eight miles wide; then its senators refused to vote for Michigan's admission unless the people of the new state would smile sweetly and say it was all right with them. Instead, Michigan's "boy governor," Stevens T. Mason, ordered the Territorial militia, 200 strong, to invade Ohio. After a four days' march this army, equipped with quite a few guns but with more long broom handles, encamped before Ashtabula, Michigan (now Toledo, Ohio), and demanded immediate and unconditional surrender. The town yielded, a treaty was signed, or at least orally agreed on, and the army marched back to Detroit. Only to find two weeks later that they had to do it all over again. The record is a little vague, but something seems to have gone wrong. This time the invasion was by water, in the steamer *Argo*. Although Ashtabula surrendered a second time, Michigan was euchred out of its territory after all, because the bill for admission to the Union was deadlocked as long as Ohio's senators opposed it. President Andrew Jackson then had the bright idea of making a dicker whereby Michigan would get a large area of land north of the Straits of Mackinac, in return for the strip that Ohio wanted. A bad bargain—"worthless" land God knew where up near the Arctic Circle—but Michigan was eager for the blessings of statehood. That's how Michigan acquired its upper peninsula, one of the richest copper regions in the world—with enough wealth in iron left over to buy up a dozen boundary strips, leaving Toledo out, which has grown up later; at the time it was a little town of 1,500.

What a corking mock-heroic novel that war could make! Until now it has been completely neglected as a subject.

But even such moments of comic-opera drama are comparatively rare in the state's history. The fiction writer is reduced to looking for his effects in slow mass movements, transitions lacking in "theater," the displacement of the lumber man by the farmer and of the farmer by the assembly-line man in the automobile factory. Such themes are too promising to be neglected. And behind the physical drama of lumber—the log-jams and sawmill camps often treated in fiction—there is an even more highly exciting economic and political drama, which is largely untouched. What battles were fought in the banks and on the stock market over lumber, and how were log-jams and blazed trails connected with governorships and seats in the United States senate? There is many a story there in search of its author.

What has actually been done by novel-

Next Week

FAKE AUTHORS
By FREDERICK LEWIS ALLEN

MY MEMOIRS
By EDITH BOLLING WILSON
Reviewed by William Allen White

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ists with Michigan pine is large in bulk but not too impressive in substance. Stewart Edward White stands at the head of the list. He won his spurs as a fiction writer by describing life in the Michigan lumber camps but he has since made California his home and many far-away places on the globe his settings. Author of many novels, he has maintained a level of excellence that is fairly high. On the whole he is probably the most competent writer of the he-man type of fiction that Michigan has produced.

To this he-man school belong numerous writers, as for instance Rex Beach and James Oliver Curwood. These novelists are likely to depend for plot on combinations of situations that are considerably more dramatic than may be expected in real life. Authors of this type sprouted by the dozen in Michigan during the first quarter of our century and they sold by the millions. They had their reward in honest dollars honestly earned in providing honest entertainment. What more can they ask? What more can we ask?

Unreasonably we keep on asking for more, reflecting somewhat enviously that we would be willing to trade the whole caboodle of them, and a couple of dozen others who could not legitimately be placed in the "school," for a single Dreiser, or for a Sinclair Lewis or an Ellen Glasgow or a Ruth Suckow.

In sober earnest, we do have better novelists than my description of the he-man "school" suggests. It would be easily possible to name a dozen individual Wolverine writers who have done one or two or sometimes even three books that so far outdistance the best achieved by the White - Beach - Curwood - (etc.) group that they hardly belong in the same world, let alone the same state. But in literature, unfortunately, mass as well as quality makes an impact, and a single novel, no matter how fine, seldom has vitality enough to live beyond the half-decade in which it appears. I can't resist mentioning Harold H. Armstrong's "Zell" and Lee J. Smits's "The Spring Flight" as examples of what I mean. There also was G. D. Eaton, whose one novel, "Backfurrow," the public rejected, probably because its thesis was that the earth is *not* good.

Bachrach

Edgar A. Guest

For the Wolverine novelists who can handle them, subjects seem to be lying all around them like acres of diamonds. First of all, the blast furnaces and assembly lines of the automobile factories. Fifteen years ago Lawrence H. Conrad tried his hand at the subject in a novel called "Temper." Last fall Wessel Smitter made it the theme of "F.O.B. Detroit." These two books are mere hints of what can be done with a subject that is truly Wolverine in its material but as universal in its implications as the machine it celebrates. Michigan has put the world on automobile wheels; Michigan novelists are still jogging along in one-hoss shays —at least in the treatment of this particular theme.

The upper peninsula, out of which much of the steel comes that is used in the automobiles, is still almost completely untouched by Michigan's novelists. It is a subject rich in possibilities, and it has a genuine Wolverine flavor. Leonard Cline, in "Godhead," did something with the Finns who work the mines, and Mildred Walker, in "Fireweed," exploited the subject tentatively. A few others have made passes at that empire of copper and iron mines and Christmas trees and red raspberries that we took in trade for Ohio votes, but for the most part the fictional ore of the region still lies unworked.

Ring Lardner

During the past twenty-five years Michigan has become one of the really important resort states. Perhaps it is unreasonable to expect that feature of our life to be represented in important fiction. Summer resorts are in their very nature the cream puffs of life, while vital fiction needs red meat. More surprising is the relative neglect of the Great Lakes in Michigan fiction. They are of course, the most important geographical fact about Michigan and it might be expected that the subject would appeal to romanticists and realists both. To this day there are retired old salts living in some of the lake ports, and there is hardly a town along the hundreds of miles of shoreline that does not have its traditions of vessels that went down without a trace in the titanic storms that sometimes sweep the lakes. There are few thrills comparable to that of standing on the shore, breasting a gale that cuts off the breath, feeling the sting of fine dune sand on face and hands, exulting in the power and the fury of wind and water masses. Several of the "red-blood" writers and a few others have been attracted to the subject—but most of the recent writers have lacked the kind of knowledge that would justify a serious attempt to build a literary career on the theme. In most of the books and stories in which the subject is treated at all, the portrayal of life on the lakes is incidental to something else. No writer has yet appeared in this state who can in any sense be called the Joseph Conrad or even the William McFee of life on the Great Lakes. Perhaps it is unreasonable to expect that. Yet it is obviously a subject that might produce a writer as great as either of these. John Hermann at the moment seems the most likely candidate for honors in this field.

In poetry Michigan early won notoriety, if not genuine fame. During the days when wilderness was still king, a versifier arose who was so sublime in naïveté that she won the excited appreciation of Mark Twain in "Following the Equator." Even in those days she was less well known by her real name, Mrs. Julia A. Moore, than by her title, "The Sweet Singer of Michigan." By that name she became an amusing minor note in America's literary tradition. It is a real adventure to read all her lugubrious verses at a gulp, because there is in her poetry a wealth of unintended humor. For the lady herself one cannot help having a deep respect; she was in deadly earnest as a poet and shrewd entertainment promoters exploited her by arranging readings of her "works" at twenty-five cents a seat. When she finally realized that her audiences came to mock her and not to admire her poetry, she rose to a pitch of reckless public indignation that had something truly fine about it. There is pathos in her story rather than the humor that her name usually suggests, for apparently she was sincere and genuinely loved poetry.

During the generation that closed the nineteenth century, Michigan provided another poet who won the ear of the nation—Will Carleton. His "Over the Hill to the Poor-House," "Farm Ballads," "Farm Legends," and numerous other poems of farm life have gradually been fading from the public mind, but they were enormously popular in their day. Michigan still takes Carleton very seriously and is as proud of him as Indiana is of James Whitcomb Riley.

What of poetry in Michigan today? Before me as I write I have a volume published in 1936 called "Michigan Poets," an anthology of what was presumably the best work of Wolverine poets at that time. Also, for 1937, a mimeographed sheaf of poems by members of the Poetry Society of Michigan. Honestly, and uninfluenced by mere state pride, I can testify that not a few of these poets meet Ludwig Lewisohn's severe test: they are successful in the "transmutation of impassioned experience into intelligible personal form." But once more, mass is lacking to give impact to their work. We haven't a single poet who is to Michigan

(*Continued on page* 16)

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Pearl Buck's New Novel

THE PATRIOT. By Pearl Buck. New York: The John Day Co. 1939. $2.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE DANGERFIELD

PEARL BUCK has the gift, and it is no small one, of conveying her Chinese characters across that abyss which divides the East from the West, and of landing them safely on our side, still Chinese. Nothing seems to have been taken from them, nothing added to them, in transit. This may be an illusion —having no first-hand knowledge of China I cannot possibly tell—but an illusion is all that any reader has the right to ask of a novelist. It was because she gave us this illusion of seeing the Chinese as they really are that her "The Good Earth" took our breath away. When other novels appeared, on similar lines, we had got our breath back, and we began to ask ourselves whether that remarkable novel had not said all, or almost all, that Pearl Buck had to say.

This is an unkind question. Moreover, it is a banal one—we always ask it of writers whose first success was due to their interpretation of an unfamiliar scene. But here it is, forcing itself into the mind. And "The Patriot" should provide an answer; for "The Patriot" deals with the love of a Chinese man for a Japanese woman, a tragic and contemporary theme.

Wu I-wan is the son of a wealthy Shanghai banker. His friendship with the poor student En-lan leads him into certain revolutionary activities, on account of which he is obliged to leave China in a hurry. In Japan, he enters the business of his father's friend, Muraki, a merchant of Nagasaki; and the story changes, not only in scene but in mood. It becomes a chronicle of life in an upper class, conservative Japanese family. I-wan falls in love with Muraki's daughter, Tama. Meanwhile, the troubles of China fade from I-wan's mind; even the rape of Manchuria is only a barrier between him and marriage with Tama, a barrier easily surmounted when the newspapers begin to talk of "peace." Their marriage is happy; two sons are born; not even a disastrous earthquake can disturb I-wan's peace unduly, for earthquakes are taken for granted and houses are easily rebuilt. Then, very suddenly, he learns what Japan has really been doing to China, and that he must leave his family and go home to fight.

He is sent by Chang Kai-shek into the northwest interior, with a message to an officer of the communist army, who, conveniently enough, turns out to be his old friend En-lan. En-lan and his men are fighting a savage guerilla warfare against the Japanese. I-wan, who is both an idealist and sentimentalist, does not always see eye to eye with En-lan, particularly in the matter of torturing prisoners; but on the whole he recovers his old revolutionary ideals. The book leaves him with little hope of seeing Tama and his children again.

Certainly a story of this kind should tell us whether or not that rich vein, first revealed in "The Good Earth," is really running thin. The answer is not a reassuring one. In the first place, the novel seems to be trying to do two things at once—to give us a picture of Japanese life, and to throw some light on the mind of the Chinese revolutionary. These are worthy objectives, but they are also unrelated objectives: or rather, they could be related only by a passionate awareness of the horrid "revenge" which Japan is wreaking upon China, and, by contrast, of the miraculous emergence of such people as En-lan. This, if I understand her intentions rightly, is the center of Pearl Buck's story; this underlies and unifies her plot; this gives all her characters their relevance for us. But here a second fault in "The Patriot" appears. It lacks—or at any rate seems to lack—the necessary passion. The characters are not substantial enough (not only in the Japanese scenes where China is at best a memory and a rumor, but also in the scant scenes of actual warfare) to come at all close to this stormy center, which alone can give them meaning. They are, as it were, expelled from it; they fly away; they take their stand on the edge of reality, where, like the figures along the border of a scroll or a plate, they serve to decorate but cannot define.

Freedom of the Mind

SEASONED TIMBER. By Dorothy Canfield. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1939. $2.50.

Reviewed by J. P. MARQUAND

THE publishers of this novel point out that the writer "pictures a Vermont which is symbolic of an America . . ." but actually this is a story which might move with the same veracity against the background of Virginia's Blue Ridge or of Minnesota's lakes. The only thing which makes it essentially provincial is that all the characters are interested in one of those half public, half private "academies" now quite definitely recognized as a New England contribution to secondary education. T. C. Hulme—he never could get them to put the l in his name—is the principal of this Vermont school, but he is not a Vermonter himself, having been born in New York, the son of Scottish and English parents, and educated at Columbia. His sudden love in middle age for a girl some twenty years his junior is very movingly described by Miss Canfield. When a parvenu trustee of the school at his death leaves a huge endowment with the stipulation that no Jews shall be admitted, that the tuition shall be raised to encourage a better "class" of pupil, and that the whole academy shall be turned into a first-rate preparatory school, the reactions of Mr. Hulme and of his fellow citizens in the little town of Clifford are what one might expect from any self-respecting group of voters anywhere. In spite of this heavy temptation they refuse at town election to change the character of one of their most prized institutions and Mr. Hulme is left with his integrity, though a younger and not nearly as intelligent or attractive man marries the girl.

From the jacket of "Seasoned Timber"

This whole story of lost love and of intellectual freedom, moving at a slow but studied pace, exhibits the narrative skill and the insight into character which has made Dorothy Canfield one of our more important novelists. The introspections of Mr. T. C. Hulme, if sometimes long to the point of being tedious, when added together make him as good an American schoolmaster as has appeared for some time in fiction. The girl, Susan, though a little more human frailty might have made her more convincing, and Hulme's old Aunt Lavina, and Mr. Dewey, born in the town seventy-four years before, and many of the younger alumni, attain all the dimensions of reality.

If this is not one of the author's best books, the fault lies more with her subject than with her artistic ability. Somehow it is very difficult to put the life of a school into fiction, perhaps because all its details are so far removed from the average reader's world. Indeed, when one considers the handicap of Mr. Hulme's school, it is remarkable that "Seasoned Timber" ends by being a well rounded piece of work. Through all its pages world events call with a present-day insistence, so that even a provincial town must face them, and Miss Canfield has finally brought her New England skillfully and inevitably into the current of a changing time.

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America's Frontier

THE NEW WESTERN FRONT. By Stuart Chase, in collaboration with Marian Tyler. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company. 1939. *Cloth,* $1.50; *paper,* 75 cents.

Reviewed by ELMER DAVIS

THE only front which Americans ought to defend is the shore line of the Western Hemisphere. So Mr. Chase argues in a rambling book full of brilliant phrases, with a few gaping lacunae in its usually sound reasoning. Most of the argument, as he is the first to admit, you have heard before if you follow the current debate on international relations; but you have seldom heard it said so well. And the opening chapter is his own—a chapter so striking and effective that the rest of the book is something of an anticlimax.

This is simply an annotated map of what the United States would be if it were like Europe—split up into twenty nations of which Mr. Chase supplies the boundaries, the names, and a brief sketch of each one's economic needs, national aspirations, and traditional grudges. His contention that there is not much hope of foreigners' being able to do anything for a continent which actually is so divided is so self-evident that he might well have rested his argument there. But when he goes on the reader begins to ask questions. Following Jerome Frank, he makes England the villain of European history for resisting attempts at Continental integration; it sounds as if England is still the villain, resisting Hitler's *Drang nach Osten.* Really Mr. Chase seems to have been unfair to Mr. Neville Chamberlain, difficult as that feat may be.

It is hardly likely that Mr. Chase would enjoy seeing Europe integrated by the only possible integrator now in sight, but he feels that all that is Europe's business, not ours. So it is if the integrator thereafter lets us alone or is unable to do us any damage; but Mr. Chase overlooks the possibility that England might prefer to be integrated too—with the reservation of a few Sonderrechte—rather than fight with the risk of being overthrown. That possibility compels a reëxamination of the logical bases of American isolationism, and few of us are at present bold enough to guess the answer. However, it might be just as well to file a demurrer to Mr. Chase's conviction that we were swept into war by propaganda in 1917 and may be so swept again. Propaganda played its part twenty years ago; but a good many people got their emotions set when the Germans marched into Belgium. And if many people are changing their opinions now it is not propaganda that is changing them but their own reasoning—faulty perhaps, but their own. So far as propaganda is concerned, the Chamberlain government has done itself more damage in American public opinion than a thousand British lecturers could undo; the late remarks of Senator Pittman were only one of many indications that the strongest emotional argument for isolation today is the character of the present British government.

But this is getting away from Chase's book, which even if a familiar argument is good reading matter. Admirable is his advice about Latin-American relations: "Talk as little as possible about the Monroe Doctrine. Talk as little as possible about Pan-Americanism. Talk as little as possible about anything." Also some of his concluding remarks on domestic affairs: "There is a Nazi menace to us, and this is it—there is almost no unemployment in Germany, Italy or Russia. . . . If we can find an invention or a series of inventions [economic and financial, he means, not inventions that would start up that famous "new industry"] to conquer unemployment without piling up a mountain of debt, some day to be repudiated, we shall be as immune to foreign isms and ideologies as an iron dog is to rabies."

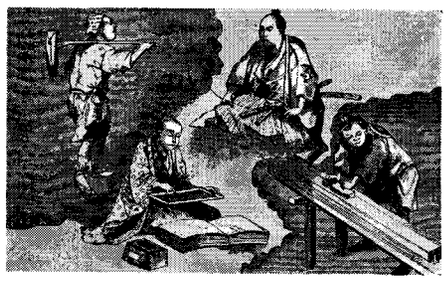
The Life of Townsend Harris

HE OPENED THE DOOR OF JAPAN. By Carl Crow. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1939. $3.

Reviewed by T. A. BISSON

IF the average American were asked to name his country's outstanding diplomatic achievement in the Far East, he might possibly choose the opening of Japan. He would almost certainly attribute this achievement to Commodore Perry. But he would be wrong. Perry merely pushed the door ajar. The more difficult task was performed by Townsend Harris, first resident American diplomat in Japan. Harris put nearly two years of unremitting effort into the negotiation and eventual signature—on July 29, 1858—of the American commercial treaty with Japan. During this long period he was virtually isolated from the outside world, and dependent for company on a single foreigner—his interpreter, Mr. Heusken. Much of the time he was seriously ill. Ships carrying his mail and supplies failed to arrive, and long overdue salary payments forced him to contract large debts to the Japanese. His initial reception at Shimoda by the Japanese authorities was the reverse of hospitable, and was followed by months of suspicion, obstruction, and hostility. Every conceivable obstacle was placed in the way of his diplomatic negotiations. In the face of all this he persevered, and—crowning triumph—won the respect and esteem of the Japanese officials and people. Today his name is revered throughout Japan, legends and plays have been built about him, and the places he visited have been commemorated.

The story of Townsend Harris's life is a remarkable one, not least because it has been ignored and virtually forgotten by his own countrymen. Carl Crow has made admirable use of his materials, notably the annotated journal of Harris prepared by Dr. Mario Cosenza. He has written a swiftly moving, full-rounded biography, which successfully blends scholarship with literary excellence. His own research



The four classes of society in Japan —soldier, farmer, laborer, merchant (from "He Opened the Door of Japan.")

adds new facets to the early life of the New York merchant, who used his Tammany associations mainly to further establishment of the academy which became C.C.N.Y. The dogged perseverance which led to eventual success in this enterprise was also turned to account in Harris's negotiation of the first American treaty with Siam, and most of all in his work in Japan.

His diplomatic activity occurred at a time when the Western nations were aggressively pushing into the Far East. The treaty of "amity and commerce" which he negotiated with Japan was taken as a model for similar agreements successively concluded at that period with other powers. A generation later Japan fought bitterly to throw off the extraterritorial and tariff shackles of these "unequal treaties." At the time, they smoothed Japan's inevitable transition from a policy of national exclusion to one of full participation in international life, and probably spared Japan forcible aggression on the scale visited upon China. Harris clinched his case by pointing out this fact to the Japanese authorities, but his success was due chiefly to his own personal efforts, to his skill, courage, and integrity, unbacked by any display of force. It was this which won him the hearts of the Japanese people, who do well to honor him. America might well follow Japan's example.

T. A. Bisson, a member of the staff of the Foreign Policy Association, is the author of "Japan in China."

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Man Alone and Men Together

THE STRICKLANDS. By Edwin Lanham. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1939. $2.50.

Reviewed by OLIVER LAFARGE

IN his new novel Mr. Lanham applies matured, skillful writing and craftsmanship to a meaty, exciting story. We speak of a novel being "laid in" a particular section, implying that the novelist, having thought up a good plot, then proceeds to pick out a desirable setting for it. It would be more correct to say that "The Stricklands" is built out of the very soil of the Oklahoma hills. Hillbillies, share-croppers, Indians, Negroes, politicians, all the strange new mélange that makes Oklahoma the strangest and most interesting of states, are genetically part of the story.

From the jacket of "The Stricklands"

It is a sectional novel and a social document which ought to do as much to make Americans vividly conscious of the situation of our poorest farmers as all the protests and publications issued to date. It will do this because it will be read for its own sake, for pleasure, as a fast-moving, even melodramatic, story.

In a curious way, without conscious intention, this book is a completion of the incomplete statement which forms the basis of "To Have and Have Not." Pat Strickland, the outlaw, whose flight and death carry the action of the book, is the man alone, trying by single-handed violence to change his lot, and failing. Jay, his brother, the tenant-farmer organizer, is the other half, the man devoting his life, risking his life, to make possible the basic change without which the individual is helpless. Mr. Lanham states his definition simply, in the father's words to Jay, "I know things have been bad fer us and I can see why you couldn't stand fer it, neither of you. It made you want to go out and fight to make things better and it made Pat want to go out and kick the world in the pants."

There is a further parallel to Hemingway's novel in the virility and solidity of the Stricklands and their fellow farmers, white, Indian, and Negro, as against a certain thinness in the more favored people thrown up against them. The difference is implied, not stated, coming out through actual contact, without attempting the symbolism of "To Have and Have Not," which only a great stylist could handle. "The Stricklands" never deviates from the narrative of certain entirely understandable human beings, thereby retaining the quality of *story*, the constant desire to know what happens next, fundamental to good fiction.

In a story such as Steinbeck's remarkable "In Dubious Battle," the organizers come from outside; communists, they are engaged in a long war of which their present endeavor is only one small battle. They follow an international creed, to further which they manipulate the workers to gain their larger end. Out of this comes a sense of discouragement, which is exactly reversed in Mr. Lanham's book because of the faith one is allowed in the people themselves, and in the organizers who have arisen among them simply because they are men, Americans, fighting for themselves and their own. This hopefulness centers in the spontaneous reaction of the white hill-billies to the beating and death of the Negro organizer, Rock Island Jones, the angry response of free men to attempted intimidation. Incidentally, the development of Jones is one of the prettiest technical jobs in the book.

"The Stricklands" starts rather slowly. Mr. Lanham uses a variant of the internal monologue in which the thoughts of his main characters are fully expressed in their own colloquial speech. The result is dragging in spots, heavily until one becomes used to it, then cumulatively more and more effective. A cutting of as little as two or three percent would make a great difference.

A week or more after reading it, "The Stricklands" leaves an impression of power, of remembered pleasure, of a good bet for the Pulitzer Prize.

After the Gilded Age

ROPE OF GOLD. By Josephine Herbst. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1939. $2.50.

Reviewed by RICHARD A. CORDELL

THIS is the third volume of Josephine Herbst's trilogy of documentary novels begun in 1933 with "Pity Is Not Enough," the story of a Western family during the Gilded Age, a saga of gloom. The second novel of the trilogy, "The Executioner Waits," which was clearer in its Marxian ideology, pictured the chaotic social and industrial conditions in America in the years immediately following the World War. In "Rope of Gold" the reader must infer that what was chaos is now undeniably disintegration, that American society is swiftly crumbling. Sitdown strikes and farmers' revolts are not accidental phenomena, but surface manifestations of a volcano that will blow us sky high any day.

It is difficult to write a proletarian novel fairly and difficult to judge one fairly. In both "social" novels and plays the tendency to vilify the employer, exalt the laborer, and patronize the middle class seems irresistible. Miss Herbst will not grant one laudable quality to the capitalist; the middle class by many thistly insinuations she makes completely ridiculous. The reader begins to feel very sheepish that he ever engaged in any such fatuous, bourgeois pleasures as playing bridge, staying at home evenings with his family, pottering about his garden. But Miss Herbst does not idealize the "workers." (The narrow use of this word is amusing to many of us outside the Party.) Her laborers and organizers, for all their high social ideals, make messes of their private lives, and the author does not attempt to blame the economic system for all their botch-work.

Robert McAfee

Josephine Herbst

Josephine Herbst's early novels were obviously influenced by Dos Passos, but "Rope of Gold," although similar to "1919" and "The Big Money" in general treatment, is a powerful, original novel. It is better written than any of Dos Passos's novels, and depends little on tricks. Miss Herbst's style is less laconic and pinched than formerly, and if not exactly rich, it is right for her subject matter. No one, not even Hemingway or Lewis, has a surer sense and command of the vernacular, and as a matter of very small consequence, it might be added that Miss Herbst yields nothing to Dos Passos or Hemingway scatologically. One suspects that the author has a strong sense of humor, but she rigorously limits its use.

"Rope of Gold" will delight those readers who share the author's political and economic beliefs. Other readers will not find the book dull, but they may wonder whether such modern proletarian fiction is any more effective as a medium of propaganda than was the sentimentalism of Dickens in "Hard Times" or the plain, unvarnished accounts of oppression in Garland's "Main Traveled Roads." At any rate, "Rope of Gold" will give them an interpretation of our age of labor problems and general unrest sharply different from that afforded by their newspapers.

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The Saturday Review
of Literature

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Modern Poetry and All That

THE day after Christmas (last) the current issue of *Time* devoted its book section to a six column criticism of ten more or less modern poets, all American with the exception of a translation of Rainer Maria Rilke. The *Time* critic had evolved a new classification of poets into three types: poets, poetasters, and poeticules. The poets were those whose words "made unfaltering sense." If versifiers only *pretended* to make their words make sense, they were poetasters; if they ignored having their words make sense they were poeticules. The writers examined were—among others—Robinson Jeffers, William Carlos Williams, Genevieve Taggard, and Kenneth Fearing; but one of the others who got the highest rating as a true poet was Laura Riding. Her words made unfaltering sense. Mr. Jeffers was a "vasty poetaster" (rather euphonious, that), Mr. Williams was predominantly so. Miss Taggard was a "worried, earnest, poetical nondescript," and Mr. Fearing was partly poeticule and partly poet. A poem of Miss Riding's was quoted to prove her top of the heap. It made no sense to the present commentator.

In fact the whole lengthy analysis was a good deal of nonsense, though astonishingly high-brow for its medium. But if modern poetry means the poetry that is most dryly intellectual and almost completely fails to communicate with the average mind, Miss Riding's is that poetry. Yet the main thesis of the *Time* reviewer was that "to the extent that poets fulfill their poethood they are making human communication more possible." Quite aside from the fact that "poethood" is an expression that makes one qualmsick, the whole matter was extremely bewildering to one who, in his time, has had a good deal to do with the criticism of verse.

One always comes back to matters of definition. When you say a person's words make sense: to whom do you mean that they make sense? The case in point is that obviously to the *Time* reviewer a particular poet's words were as clear as crystal, whereas to another person who has in his time read a great deal of poetry past and present they were extremely obscure. In any event, the mere fact that words make sense has nothing at all to do with whether or not they contain that unanalyzable element known as poetry. Most of the work we call poetry is, of course, merely verse, as distinguished from prose. Poetry is an incalculable element that sometimes enters into verse and may enter into prose. There have been a thousand definitions of poetry and none has been completely satisfactory. One of the least satisfactory yardsticks by which to judge poetry is, in our not so humble opinion, that of the *Time* critic.

But one tendency of modern taste among the highly critical, as they esteem themselves to be, is their liking for the entirely denatured. The alcoholic content of the most too-too modern poetry is extremely low. That is to their taste, and they stick to it. It isn't to ours. We like poetry that does not present itself to us as a cross-word puzzle or in cipher without a code-book, but poetry that does something to our innards. Which does not mean at all that we like "hearts and flowers" or Eddie Guest or all the nut-sundaes and varieties of soda-pop that pass for poetry.

C. Day Lewis put it very well when he said that because modern poets felt that they had lost their audience they began to talk "the private language of personal friends." From reading what Miss Riding has to say of her own approach to poetry we don't think she cares a whoop whether she communicates with anyone else or not. She considers that she is casting pearls. If you can get it, good for you. If you can't, you aren't worth bothering about.

We have a good deal of sympathy with that point of view, in the sense that the poet *must* write as it pleases him to write. If he writes what other people tell him to write, he may get some good verse, but he won't get poetry. The whole question of propaganda in poetry simply boils down to the fact that if I (we will say) am trying to write to please the Republican, the Democrat, the Socialist, or the Communist party—even trying to further the interests of the best social or economic cause in the world—I may incidentally write some good verse but I can't possibly write poetry, because I am doing it for an ulterior motive. When I write to please myself I may write some very bad verse, but that is the only way in which I can ever hope to write poetry.

Right back to definition again! What *is* poetry? Ah, now, now, dear friends! We thought we'd agreed that it couldn't be defined. To this particular versifier, the best definitions have been in terms of physical sensation, as when Emily Dickinson felt as though the top of her head was coming off or A. E. Housman cut himself shaving. It does something to you. And why is that? Because poetry is not, primarily, an intellectual exercise.

Every poet knows that, and it is as old as the hills. But the extreme intellectuals, and those who would make the poet a good factory-workman for the new super-state, don't *seem* to know it at all. Hence, as Chesterton once pointed out, one of the best hotly revolutionary poems written in our times was written by a Roman Catholic, Hilaire Belloc. He wasn't writing it to order for anybody. He was writing it because he felt damn angry. On the intellectual side, one can do all sorts of intricate and remarkable things with words to please oneself—but the greatest wisdom in the world has always been conveyed in the clearest possible language. That language, however, has had to have, vitalizing it, the most intense human emotion.

Intensity is what characterizes poetry, and a good many writers of the day who are extraordinarily gifted and highly intelligent and intricately versed in matters of technique, simply haven't got it. Another thing that poets of the day have largely lost is a sense of rhythm. That does not mean that we like only barrel-organ rhythm, though we like that too, in its place. A great deal of the verse one reads is a sort of intelligent conversation. In it are certain prose rhythms. But that isn't enough.

It is a sign of age, we know, when one begins to prefer the intensely clear as well as the preferably terse. We shall not mention ornamentation here, either, because that gives the modern poet agonized convulsions. But what is the aim of poetry: to convey a powerful impression or merely to give one a headache?

We all know that poetry contains elliptical statement, that you can't make a map of it, that you can't diagram it, that you can't paraphrase it. We all know that experimentation is, as they say in "1066 and All That," "a good thing." An art is dead that does not develop new ways and means. A very subtle mind cannot be understood by a perfectly ordinary mind. At best you can only communicate with those whose minds are more or less akin to yours. But it seems to us that poets of late years have gone to all lengths to escape communicating with anybody. Thank God, we think they're now trying again to communicate.

A wandering discourse, such as is all discourse about poetry. The devil is in it—or God—and moves in a mysterious way. But you can't put poets into neat little boxes "and pack and label them for God and save them by the barrel-load" or *vice versa*. You can only trust to God that if you try to be a truly good craftsman, which involves clarity and involves taking advantage of all the resources of language, you will some day, some time, somehow, be visited by that bolt of lightning, against which most modern poets wear lightning-rods in their hats. That will be poetry. W. R. B.

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Letters to the Editor: *Condescension in Foreigners; Shelley and Castlereagh*

Miss Halsey and Miss West

SIR:—When Rebecca West wrote her rather slithering review in the *London Times* of "With Malice toward Some," she might have known that its author—she is the result of the crossing of a wasp with a butterfly—would have a word or two to say in reply. Certainly Margaret Halsey, when she admits that her book, merely "a bit of fluff," was "never designed to be floodlit by a giant intellect," has planted her sting where it will do the most good.

The condescension in foreigners, which James Russell Lowell noted many years ago, no longer functions in high places—the Prime Minister, for example, has lost it altogether—and some day it may be expected to reach the always prejudiced reviewers of American books.

A. EDWARD NEWTON.

Boca Raton, Florida.

"Death of the Heart"

SIR:—Mr. Edwin A. Halsey, of Dartmouth College, where book reviews, one is glad to learn, are examined with a skeptical eye, should nevertheless not have pounced on George Dangerfield's review of "The Death of the Heart." If Mr. Halsey will take the trouble to read the book in question (it is distinguished enough to appeal even to a Dartmouth undergraduate) he will discover, I think, that Mr. Dangerfield has written a clear, succinct, and accurate description of it. Some reviewers *are* guilty, and frequently, of empty words; not so Mr. Dangerfield in his praise of "The Death of the Heart."

DAN WICKENDEN.

Manhasset, N. Y.

What Shelley Said

SIR:—In a review in your issue of February 11 Professor Wilbur Cortez Abbott speaks of the "ferocious and unjustified assault" in "Shelley's malicious and ill-informed lines, 'I met Murder on the way, It had the face of Castlereagh.'" I wonder if the opinion—for it is no more than that—is any nearer right than the quotation; Shelley actually wrote, "*He* had a *mask like* Castlereagh." I hope that Professor Abbott does not, like too many historians, read poetry as prose and suppose that Shelley, in his "Mask," is accusing Castlereagh of legal murder. The government to which Castlereagh belonged adopted cruel and bloody repressive measures which even at that time were quite out of date in England and are now employed only in states like Germany and Russia. Castlereagh was regarded with abhorrence not only by Shelley but by Coleridge, Byron, Leigh Hunt, and every liberal mind. His brand of repression doubtless did not lead to violent revolution in England only because resistance took the mild and peaceable form advocated by Shelley in the "Mask of Anarchy" on his hearing of the Peterloo Massacre. I venture to say that your readers who know the careers and characters of both Castlereagh and Shelley will question the adjectives "malicious" and "ill-informed." Leigh Hunt was perhaps nearer the just view in writing of "the sincerity and kindheartedness of the spirit which walked in this flaming robe of verse."

F. C. PRESCOTT.

Cornell University
Ithaca, N. Y.

"He's not only a top-notch salesman, but he's got the largest collection of Gideon Bibles in the country!"

Mary Watts

SIR:—I wonder whether any of your readers, especially those among them who are librarians, can help me to locate two books that I wish to consult and which I have been unable to find in any New York collection. The books are "The Adventures of a Lady in the War of (or for) Independence," by Susan Griffiths Colpays, and "Historic Homes in (or of) the Mohawk Valley," by James Cruze.

I assume that, since the "Lady" referred to is said to be Mary Watts, that this is the same Mary Watts who married Sir John Johnson, son of Sir William, and fled with him to Canada.

I shall be sincerely grateful for any help given to me in this matter.

EDWARD HALE BIERSTADT.

New York City.

Catalonian Writers

SIR:—I have had word from the President of the Catalonian Institute of Literature saying that many of the Catalonian writers, for whom I solicited some time ago donations of from one to ten dollars a month for six months in order to purchase food, were now in France, some of them in great need. The response to my first appeal was hearty, and I wish to say to those friends of writers in distress and to others who may wish to join that I shall be able to arrange for distribution of needed food to these Catalonian intellectuals which can be arranged month by month through a friend and agent of the Institute in Marseilles. I shall be glad, therefore, to receive monthly checks from those who have pledged themselves and from any others who wish to join the group of American writers who are helping in this emergency.

HENRY S. CANBY.

New York City.

Moida

SIR:—Dick O'Neill's complaint of too many murders (*SRL*, February 11) reminds me of a man I heard lately in Womrath's, who moved slowly and sadly along the mystery shelves, sighed heavily, and went out murmuring, "All yuh see is moida, moida, moida."

G. W. BARNES.

New York City.

Correction

SIR:—In my review of "Letters to and from Mme. Du Deffand and Julie de Lespinasse" I am guilty of an unfortunate error for which I should like to make amends. Miss Berry was, of course, Horace Walpole's literary executrix and not his secretary as the review states. I wrote "executrix," but my typist transcribed it "secretary." And I carelessly failed to spot the substitution. A correspondent writes that "If there is anything left of Horace Walpole's dust—it must be turning summersaults in its grave." May I hope that this apology will allow it to settle once again to its customary peace?

C. D. ABBOTT.

Linwood, N. Y.

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"Mr. Binns repudiates with scorn the legend that . . . the spirit of fraternity hung heavy over all the Westward movement" . . . (From the jacket of "The Land Is Bright.")

The Oregon Trail

THE LAND IS BRIGHT. By Archie Binns. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1939. $2.50.

Reviewed by JAMES GRAY

ARCHIE BINNS possesses to a striking degree the dramatist's gift of persuading his readers to identify themselves closely with the characters. He writes always of simple people in the grip of fundamental emotion, and he makes it seem enormously important that they should not fail of their desires.

In "The Land Is Bright" we follow the American visionaries of 1850 traveling in their covered wagons from the Missouri River out along the Oregon Trail. The novel is a sort of log book, recording the crises as well as the casual incidents of the trip. The happenings all have the uncomplicated explosives of emotional dynamite: a child is lost; a woman dies of cholera; a man is accused of insurrection and left to probable starvation in the desert. There is no need to tease or trap the sympathy of a reader; the plight itself attracts compassion. Mr. Binns's technique is admirably suited to the development of such material. Concealing its subtlety, his hand closes in a tenacious grip upon one's feelings.

The quality of emotion that Mr. Binns persuades a reader to invest in this story is not the kind that is associated with traditional reverence for the hardihood of the pioneer. The people are often shown as savage and unfeeling in their determination to save themselves from disaster. All along the Oregon Trail, the maimed and inadequate are left to survive if they can and die if they must.

One of Mr. Binns's themes is the brutalizing effect of intense suffering. Another is the shocking cynicism of the trader class which even in the new land of the West early learned to exploit the ignorance and helplessness of the pioneers, cheerfully sending them on journeys that could end only in death and disaster. Mr. Binns repudiates with scorn the legend that the fragrance of the spirit of fraternity hung heavy over all the Westward movement. The traffic even in dreams of better life enriched some and impoverished others.

But if Mr. Binns's people are far from being universally nice, they are all intensely understandable. Some among them are rich in charm: Mr. Thomas and his wife, the radicals who read "The Age of Reason" and are suspected of being infidels but who can always be trusted to help the unfortunate until they are finally betrayed by their own trustfulness; the little six-year-old Patience Trimble who broods about the possibility of being deserted by her parents as not worth a "dollar a pound," the traveler's standard of value for all possessions; and finally Case Ford, the headlong boy from Kentucky who defies the doctrine of expediency.

A melodrama of jealousy and a tangled romance run through the story. One thing that Mr. Binns does extremely well is to lead a pretty ingenue, in the course of the overland trek, out of the haze of an adolescent dream into mature womanliness. There are amusing episodes, such as the one in which an Indian attack is defeated by a clever ruse. But what is chiefly admirable in this story is the honest intensity with which it dramatizes every emotion—small and large—of an experiment in living, often catastrophic, sometimes amusing, and always deeply touching.

Double Diary

DEMON DAUGHTER. The Confession of a Modern Girl and Her Mother. By Honoré Morrow. New York: William Morrow & Co. 1939. $2.50.

Reviewed by FRANCES WOODWARD

THIS twenty-fourth of the published volumes of Mrs. Morrow is a very hard book on which to make a positive comment. Not because "Demon Daughter" is a complicated affair—it is, on the contrary, simple in the extreme—but because for every statement to be made about it there is an equally valid statement to be made in refutation. A lot of women are going to read and enjoy it. On the other hand few men are likely to get far into it, and many of the women are going to be bored, or shocked, or derisively annoyed. In the first place it is less a novel than a collection of first person essays, rather in the manner of Stuart Sherman's "Dear Cornelia." It is a sort of double diary, highly readable, competently written, and with no literary distinction at all. It has the breadth of life in it; and is sometimes so stilted as to cause actual pain. It deals frankly with a good many problems of adolescence; and is sometimes so priggish as to deny belief.

"Demon Daughter" deals with the lives of Felicia and her mother from the time when Felicia is two until the time when, at twenty-one, she makes a far better marriage than anybody but her mother would ever have expected, and is well on her way to being a first-rate sculptress to boot. The whole tale is straight domesticity. Servants and children and gardens and schools; illness and death and health and disaster. It really amounts to a lot of reassuring advice to haunted mothers, from one who does not believe in psychiatry or progressive schools, and who feels that somehow the English and the Europeans do a better job than Americans do. Some of it is charming. Lots of it is cloying. Almost none of it is downright dull. All of it is going to be read by a vast number of women, and a lot of them are going to be cheered by it, in a wistful way.

Bee

By FRANCES FROST

NOW the great and velvet bee
stands motionless upon the sun.
So master of his flight is he,
not by the gust is he undone.

But with his wings invisible
he chooses thus to pause in space
that may be seen his shoulders pale,
through gold his dark incisive face.

Bee-bread and sap of honey burn
the flowery roads that he must fare.
Toward vetch and toad-flax must he turn
down vagrant alleyways of air.

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Hitler without Scissors

MEIN KAMPF. By Adolf Hitler. New York: Reynal & Hitchcock. 1939. $3.
MEIN KAMPF. By Adolf Hitler. New York: Stackpole Sons. 1939. $3.

Reviewed by JAMES FREDERICK GREEN

"WHEN it rains, it pours," the rendition of an ancient proverb appropriated by a salt company, seems more suitable this week for the publishing business. After being restricted during many years of drought to an abridged edition of "Mein Kampf,*" the American public is now being showered with two unexpurgated versions. The only previous edition in English, translated by E. T. S. Dugdale and published by Houghton Mifflin in 1933, contained about one-third of the original two volumes of 1925 and 1927, so truncated that it appeared far too coherent, genteel, and harmless. A new complete edition, translated by a committee of scholars headed by Dr. Alvin Johnson, is now published by Reynal & Hitchcock, by arrangement with Houghton Mifflin. Stackpole Sons, believing that the original copyright is defective and that the book is therefore in the public domain, present simultaneously an admittedly unauthorized edition. An injunction suit, brought by Houghton Mifflin and Reynal & Hitchcock against Stackpole Sons, is now in the New York courts.

Both editions are so well produced that there is remarkably little choice between them. The Reynal & Hitchcock volume, containing 994 pages, includes footnotes explaining obscure phrases and adding historical comment, and indicates the paragraphs appearing in English for the first time. The Stackpole version, containing 669 pages, includes a preface by Ludwig Lore, columnist for *The New York Post,* but no other additions to the original text. The Stackpole translation is somewhat freer and more readable than that of Reynal and Hitchcock, but both give an excellent impression of the Hitlerian style—heavy, clumsy, digressive, obscurantist, and vituperative. Those who encounter "Mein Kampf" for the first time will probably prefer the Reynal & Hitchcock edition, because of its critical footnotes, while those who are familiar with the Nazi bible will desire Stackpole's unadorned translation.

These new translations will give the American public a new insight into the mind and character of Europe's latest Napoleon. They contain all the torrential verbiage, the racial nonsense, the egocentric emotionalism, and the surpassing shrewdness that was lacking in the abbreviated version. No one who has not ploughed through these wearisome pages can realize the driving importance of anti-semitism in Hitler's philosophy and action; for only after encountering the words "Jew" and "Jewish" for the thousandth time does one understand how an embittered, humiliated, and impoverished people were stampeded into National Socialism. In page after page frankly expounding techniques of propaganda and party organization, Adolf Hitler becomes unquestionably the Machiavelli of our age.

Perhaps the outstanding effect of the full text, a factor often forgotten in these days of ideological conflict, is the pervasive nationalism of every paragraph. Herr Hitler is first and foremost a German nationalist, embodying all the fanatical and frustrated idealism and all the muddled racism of the nineteenth century, and only secondarily a National Socialist. Very few sentences deal with financial and economic questions, a field in which Der Fuehrer is compelled to rely upon loyal experts, while hundreds of pages reveal the zealot's desire for a united and strong nation. Marxism, international socialism, Jewish capitalism, the Catholic Church, democracy, the League of Nations—these are Hitler's enemies solely because they cut horizontally through the German nation and undermine its political structure. These new translations should be bought and read throughout America for they explain much that is exploding in Europe and that is reverberating in this hemisphere.

* This was reviewed extensively, with reference to the unexpurgated German version, in a leading article by Matthew Josephson which appeared in *The Saturday Review* for October 28, 1933.—Ed.

German Headache

SURVEY AFTER MUNICH. By Graham Hutton. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1939. $2.50.

Reviewed by VERA MICHELES DEAN

GRAHAM HUTTON, the well-known British economist, who has recently made a tour of Central and Eastern Europe, wastes no time in lamenting the past or trying to apportion praise and blame. He concentrates, in business-like fashion, on assessing the strategic, economic, and political results of Munich, and analyzing the effects they may have on the future of Europe—and the world. He has facts and figures in plenty at his command, and does not allow emotion to sway his judgment.

Graham Hutton

In his estimate of the strategic aftermath of Munich—which includes a valuable survey of road and railway communications in the Danubian region — Mr. Hutton comes to the obvious conclusion that Germany's position has been immensely strengthened by the absorption of Austria, the reduction of Czechoslovakia, and the expulsion of Italy from Central Europe, which open the way to realization of the Berlin-to-Bagdad dreams cherished by pre-war Pan-Germans. Germany's economic outlook, however, is less rosy than appeared immediately after Munich. Even if the Third Reich acquires complete economic control of the Danubian region, it will still be only partially self-sufficient, especially now that it has to feed its new industrial regions, Austria and Sudetenland.

Economic domination, moreover, hinges on a far greater measure of political control than Germany has been able to establish east of Czechoslovakia. In perspective, it may appear that Germany's headaches only began at Munich. Until then Hitler had the immense advantage of dealing with German peoples—Austrians and Sudetens—many of whom sincerely wanted to go "home to the Reich." From now on, in its drive to the east, Germany must deal with non-Germans—Slavs and Magyars—who for centuries have resisted Teuton domination, and show little disposition to become vassals of the Third Reich. If the Nazis, with their racial doctrines, were not in power in Berlin, there is little doubt that the Danubian region would benefit from coöperation with Germany, whose technical skill and organizing genius would facilitate development of vast natural resources which inept or corrupt native dictatorships have done little to exploit. Even now Germany's drive to the east has had the beneficial result of forcing Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Yugoslavia to conciliate their national minorities and dissatisfied social classes by concessions which were long overdue. These very concessions, however, strengthen the resistance of the Danubian countries to Nazi domination. Politically Hitler is confronted with much the same problem which baffled the Kaiser at a time when Germany commanded far greater moral and economic resources than it does today: the problem of extending German domination to the east in the face of Slav hostility, and simultaneously conciliating or brow-beating the Western powers. The Nazis' battle is by no means won.

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Mind Raid Precautions

(Or, Advice to the Truthlorn)

BY CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

I.

WHEN I become aware that a great many people wish me to think something, a kind of inherited Quaker obstinacy asserts itself, and I am slow to think it. I discover an instinct to examine the situation and to wonder just why this pressure is being exerted; and by whom.

My private life, at its happiest, proceeds by a blissful series of accidental observations or hearsays in which I find analogy. The faculty of mind I most relish in others, most respect in myself, is that which perceives larger significance in casual episodes. For example, yesterday a friend told me that in a bank in Pittsburgh some young ladies are occasionally allotted the job of going down into the deposit vaults to wear pearl necklaces left there by the wealthy dowagers of the Golden Triangle. Pearls lose their lustre unless renewed from time to time on warm (and presumably feminine) bosoms. My friend was amused by the idea of these young women descending to sit solemnly, under guard, in the strong-rooms of Pittsburgh, probably with *Life* or *Look* or *I Spy* or whatever is the favored peepshow, replenishing from their own sculptured vitality these cold trinkets of the rich. But I sprang somberly upon the fable. For now and then someone, perhaps even I, must descend into the chilly basements of meditation to wear and keep from tarnish the bright jewelry of some ancient and unpopular ideas. It is a thankless chore. From any view of worldly flourish it is usually fatal.

II.

I'm a bit anxious about one of our duplex deities, whose power both to create and destroy is beyond calculus. Or rather, to be more fashionable in metaphor, let's say one of the world's most powerful engines, now running wild. I mean Publicity. I define it as all the arts of circulating information and opinion, for pay or for purpose. Whenever, wherever, or however you tell a number of people the same thing at the same time—and with any enthusiasm beyond the mere pleasure of the occasion—it can be called Publicity. The assiduity of its transmission has far exceeded the intelligence of its reception.

It would be a pity to abate the hilarity and gusto of journalism, which has always been irreverent. It is, even "currently" (the present cant for Now), vastly more prim than in the eighteenth century. But the whole tone of voice has altered. Journalism began in a conversational or confidential smoking-room accent. (Talented writers always hanker at least once in their lives to get it back there; for instance the Connecticut *Nutmeg.*) Now, to reach huge audiences, it has to shout or scream. Suddenly, while it was screaming, new modes of transmission arrived which carry, instantaneously, the least whisper. Great international organs are still yelling and bawling as though they thought they were living in a world of the deaf.

A kind of sensationalism that was amusing in the primitive days of Publicity—and still is to experts of the subject—becomes dangerous when let loose on great populations already bewitched with nerves. And half-educated audiences are not always apt to distinguish between tones of voice. (Did you ever notice the change of timbre when the broadcaster turns from his news items to his sponsor? He may mispronounce "Lascelles"—*Laskéllus*, he called it, poor soul, misled by all the Spanish names he'd had to read; but you may be quite sure he won't mispronounce the name of his client. He'll even spell it for you. How his voice mollifies when he turns from Telling to Selling.)

Many criticisms directed at the Press are silly. The most frequent represents it as a deeply-calculating commerce-tainted conspiracy against the public pocket. It looks different to me. In my observation the greater part of the press—always with notable exceptions—is simply childishly irresponsible; carried away by the excitement and immediacy of its job; intoxicated with a sense of false urgency. There is less excuse for the latter than ever before, because the things that are genuinely urgent come to us first by ear, unadulterated by headlines.

People like to imagine that because all our mechanical equipment moves so much faster, that we are thinking faster too. I see few signs of it. I see no one nowadays thinking more briskly than, let us say, Voltaire. A good deal of plodding and footsore thinking comes to us over the radio's miracle of instancy.

We are told that the most dangerous of poisons is carbon monoxide because it is tasteless, colorless, odorless. You don't know it's there until you're dead. In the same way the exhaust gases of Publicity—unless you have contrived your own shelters and masks—cause actual corruption of the mind. These gases are not only painless, we are so immersed in them we don't know they exist. This is the most unselfish of all eras because hardly anyone is egotist enough to wish to do his own thinking. There are always so many ready and eager to do it for us.

How many readers are aware of the curious paradoxes of print? One, for instance, that the amount of candor that can be put on any printed sheet is, within limits, irregularly proportional to the over-all size of the sheet. When you see anything printed on a theatrical or circus poster you know by instinct that a great deal of it isn't so. As the size of the sheet diminishes the proportion of possible veracity gets larger. A newspaper page is about nine times as big as the average book page; but on a book page you can be about nine times as frank. Many other elements enter: the frequency of publication; the kind of paper on which the printing is done; even the time of day when it appears. Morning papers are more likely to be conservative than afternoon—perhaps because they are put together in the more conscientious hours of the night. No publisher would dare assault the fresh morning mind of the reader, alert after sleep and coffee, with the kind of trivial fantasy that is acceptable in the afternoon. It is taken for granted that by lunch time the average man has been so beaten down by life that he will believe anything.

Chancy variables harry this exciting problem, but certain underlying laws have been discerned, known by instinct to shrewd publicists and rarely guessed by their customers. From my point of view at present, the most intelligently edited journals in America are *The New Yorker*, *Fortune*, *Variety*, and the *Reader's Digest*. If you insist on a daily as well I should have to nominate parts of the *New York Times* and of the *Christian Science Monitor*.

When I argue these matters with newspaper editors they always reply that the press can be no better than the public that supports it, and it has to tell them what they want to know (and need to know) and in the way they like to hear it. To which my only reply is that a quick-thinking press should tell its public things they need to know before they have even guessed they need to know them.

Let me repeat, I think the Publicity engineers are mostly unaware of the exhaust gas they emanate. It is in the main an unconscious emphasis—due to haste, fatigue, despair—on the easiest appeal: the shocking, the vulgar, the comic, the immediate, the premature. But they create, both in themselves and in others, so curiously distorted a sense of social values that even good men begin to hanker for what they hate. You begin to think the day is lost if there aren't any scareheads in the papers. The deepest truths come out accidentally in man's subtlest achievement, his casual argot. To sell something with huge success is now called *panicking* the customers.

This overvitalized Publicity is an onslaught on one of the most precious human faculties, memory. If you stun people's memories you can do anything with them. The daily jolt becomes necessary because the previous one is already for-

(*Continued on page* 14)

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Mind Raid Precautions

(Continued from page 12)

gotten. Incessant publicity has turned us into a United States of Amnesia; and if you remember nothing of what has happened in the past you're unlikely to foresee much of what will happen in the future.

Another thought: the Publicity professions are crippled by sentimentality. They are managed to a considerable extent by people who really believe that the Marse Henry Watterson or Arthur Brisbane sort of thing was good writing; that the great American classics are the *Message to Garcia*, or *Yes Virginia There is a Santa Claus*, or *Senator Vest on the Dog*, or *Lindbergh Flies Alone*. In other words, the only thing that gets across is raw intellectual hootch.

Humanity being what it is, every kind of communication should (ideally) be offered under conditions which make it possible for the customer to reckon his own assessment of sincerity. Radio does so. If Tom Mix is impersonated, if the orchestra is transcribed, they tell you. But even beyond that, marvellous accents and mispronunciations give you a clue to the coefficient of credibility. When they say *Zovviet Rrrushya* and *Yirrup* and *lugzury* and *skism* and *Febuary* and *burgulary* (and of course "currently") you can make your own private allowances—which may be unfair, but are your own, and deeply satisfying.

III.

My own most specific precaution is to regard the newspapers, in matters outside straight fact-reporting, as delightful mythology. They are an invaluable encyclopaedia of folklore; an accurate record of what people think they think, or what energetic persons desire them to think. The American folk probably more than any other is fanciful, myth-enamored, sentimental, eager to believe, prompt in its bowels. It worships youth, bright colors, loud noises, large and sudden effects, plenty of sugar and cream, any kind of novelty or pratt-fall. It still believes the goddess of Liberty is a Glamor Girl (a Statue of Puberty); as a matter of fact Liberty is an austere old lady who exacts harsh discipline.

Without the newspapers what would we do for advertisements, the unconscious social history of our era, and more significant than a whole shelf of Spenglers. How else would we know about Woman's pathetic nostalgia and flight from fact, passing desperately (in one winter) from crinoline to wimple to the 1910 shirtwaist, and collapsing finally into the mode of Little Girl, and the Coiffure Enfantine. To verify these things by actual encounter would be too terrible.

On the innocent mind of the American, this fairy-tale stuff falls with crushing force. The incident of the Martian broadcast last October prefigured all sorts of less recognizable mind-raids that have gone on busily ever since. It is not the purpose of this memorandum to identify them; it is the individual's privilege, since thinking has not yet been plowed under, to take his own precautions and cut his mental gas mask to fit his own face.

The power of American Publicity is so terrific, and apparently so beyond compunction or restraint, it is not impossible that what its victims naively suppose is just our exclamatory horror of War, is actually pushing the world nearer and nearer to it. You think I exaggerate? Has it occurred to you that it was American Publicity, and nothing else, that caused the two great abdications? It cost Edward his throne; and it caused Lindbergh to abdicate his American residence.

Every day that international challenges, threats, jeers, recriminations continue—and they move very fast by wire and ether—makes more likely some lunatic episode, somewhere, that can't be controlled. It will be Publicity's fault. Publicity is a Glamor Girl if you like; but she plays blind man's buff. Or, as a poet put it once when he was feeling sultry:

> Publicity, hyena bitch with wings,
> Summer in loins and winter in the brains.

IV.

Another precaution is to read the papers late. Didn't Robert Frost say in some poem that the really happy man is the one who reads his New York *Times* three days afterward? To read the papers a few days tardy takes out that venom of False Urgency. And to read out of town papers damps down the crudeness of localism. At least once a week I read a Chicago paper, to take my mind off New York; and now and then papers from Washington, Baltimore, and London.

I am interested to see—in the reports made by Mass-Observation, an organization in London which has about 2000 amateur observers out eavesdropping on the average citizen—that this doubtfulness of the wisdom of present publicities is widely felt among plain people. I do not believe, and the average man does not believe, that another World War is unavoidable. But Publicity, always supposing itself to act on the best of motives, has brought us very close to it.

I'll tell you something Robert Frost *did* say, describing a pullet on the roost—

> She shoulders with a wing so strong
> She makes the whole flock move along.

Some day that will happen in the great realm of Publicity; and some editor with a nose for News (which used to be called Intelligence) will play up a sensational rumor of Peace.

Meanwhile the Muse sits in the cellar, nursing her necklace of pearls; thinking a little sadly of those childlike and impetuous creatures who write headlines, and who—far more than any poet—impel the dangerous moods of men.

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Their struggle was, in a sense, Thomas Jefferson's own struggle, whose mother was a Randolph and whose father was "a man from the grass roots" And Thomas Jefferson, who had the rare gift of imparting some his own life to everybody he had anything to do with, was the central figure in the lives of Matthew and Jane, holding them together yet thrusting them apart — Jefferson, the aristocrat and the democrat, his appearance, ancestry, culture stamping him the gentleman, but his ideas, his sympathies, his associates placing him on the side of the new democracy

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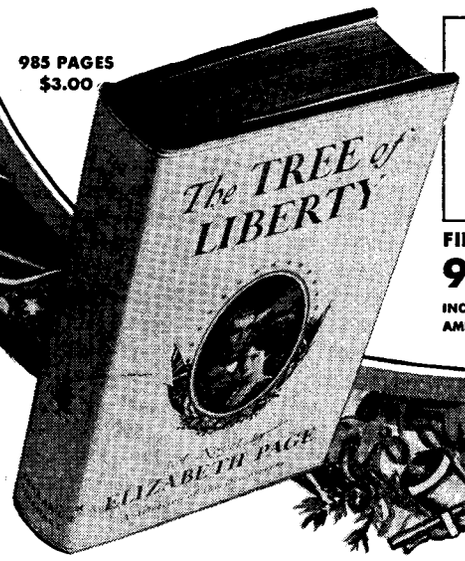

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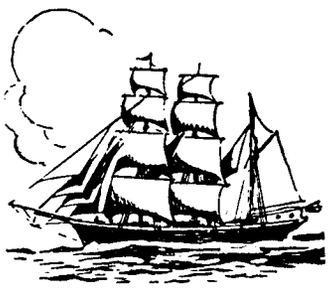

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Authors and Wolverines

(*Continued from page 4*)

what Robert Frost is to New England or Robinson Jeffers to California. True, we now have Carl Sandburg as a legal resident, but even the resort association executives stutter self-consciously when they claim him for us.

For mass we have to fall back on Eddie Guest. He is not represented in "Michigan Poets" or in the mimeographed anthology of Michigan poetry, but to the American public he probably represents Michigan poetry. I have no wish to be scornful. The poet of Mother, Home, and Heaven has his uses. And Eddie Guest even has a technical glibness that is often wanting in writers who do transmute "impassioned experience into intelligible personal form." Can even the most scornful or captious blame Mr. Guest because he is willing to let the great public pay him for his metrical glibness and his ethical rightness—not merely provide him with bread and beefsteak but with macaroons and orchids? In the house of literature are many mansions—as well as cottages and shacks and tents and even tourist camps.

That leaves drama. So far as I know, nothing has ever been written in play form in Michigan that calls for even the qualified analysis I have tried to give to the novel and to poetry. It would be easily possible to give several names, but research invariably turns up the fact that they are in reality the names of New York playwrights who once sucked their big toes in Michigan. And then they are usually minor playwrights.

Finally, there is that vast mass of writing that is done not for its own sake but as a means to an end: for instance, the several books of former Governor Chase S. Osborn, at least one of which, "The Iron Hunter," is as indigenous to Michigan as is the Northern Spy apple; and the popularized bacteriology of Paul de Kruif, the verve and lucidity of whose studies in that difficult field have deservedly given his books the appeal of best sellers. But I am trying to get Michigan literature into focus, not Michigan writing, no matter how good of its kind it may be. I am talking about Beautiful Letters, not about popular or useful reading matter.

Michigan does not come out of the examination with as high a standing as the resort men would like to believe. We are better at building automobiles that are works of art than we are at fashioning great sonnets, we make better furniture than novels, we concoct better breakfast foods than dramas. Somewhat strange that this should be so: geography has set us apart, separating us from our neighbors on several sides by a hundred miles of water. A former Michigan writer, seeing his native state in perspective, has called us the "Middle North" because he feels we are not genuinely a part of the Middle West but have a spiritual as well as a geographical apartness. That should make for the individuality that is the very life of literature. Nor are we without interest in letters. The state is said to be the mother of women's literary clubs as much as it is of sit-down strikes; and just as we imported Herbert O. (Fritz) Crisler from the Eastern seaboard when our football team went into a chronic decline, so we brought in Robert Frost from Vermont—a few years earlier—when poetry showed signs of anemia. Unfortunately for poetry, however, while the football team instantly came out of its economic and athletic recession, poetry is not much less anemic after treatment than before. Each summer, in the little college town of Olivet, under the leadership of President Joseph Brewer, a Writers' Conference is held. At the University we have at times maintained a chair for a resident poet, and also at Ann Arbor we have established the Avery Hopwood awards, which, in cash at least, are not less attractive than the Pulitzer prizes, with competition far less severe. But until now at least they have not produced a work of genius—some of the winning volumes apparently are not publishable. It might be expected that these prizes would constitute a stimulus such as is lacking in most other states. But this is neutralized by the fact that in the state containing the fourth largest city in America there is not a single publishing house or magazine with a national appeal. Is that a cause or a symptom?

There does not appear to be much that the resort executives can do about the dearth of first-raters among Michigan writers. Genius is elusive and unpredictable and no way has yet been discovered of depositing a pinch of salt on its tail. Perhaps the best we here in Michigan can do is to follow the lead of Mr. Kenneth Roberts who, in "Trending into Maine," claims for that state just about every writer who has ever spent a two-weeks' vacation there. We are a resort state, too, by gum, and even great poets and novelists would probably enjoy our cool breezes in August. On this principle we could in fact already claim quite a few top-notchers: Robert Frost, for instance, who lived a year or two as resident poet at the University of Michigan; Ford Madox Ford, who spent many months at Olivet College and wrote his big tome, "The March of Literature," there; perhaps even Edward Everett Hale, because some people say that "The Man without a Country" was written at Mackinac Island. Probably most exciting of all, if this principle is followed we can put a lien on Ernest Hemingway; in the days before he made "bull in the afternoon" pay him dividends, he spent a whole summer in Michigan, and then laid the scene of his "Torrents of Spring" in the Wolverine State.

Arnold Mulder is on the faculty of Kalamazoo College.

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We doubt whether any upheaval so general will ever occur, short of the complete collapse of civilization, as to lessen the perennial timeliness of *The Maxims of François, Duc de la Rochefoucauld*, which, translated into English by F. G. Stevens, have just been published as the fifth title in the *Hesperides Series*.[1] This is unique among reprint series. Designed by Mr. Bruce Rogers in editions limited to 500 copies, these are typographical gems, and at the same time inexpensive. The volumes previously published are: *The Poems of Robert Herrick* (2 vols.);[1] *Cranford*, by Mrs. Gaskell; White's *Natural History of Selborne;* and the Poems *of Thomas Gray*. In *The Maxims of La Rochefoucauld*, Mr. Stevens's translation and the French text appear on facing pages. Like its predecessors this volume will appeal to those who seek charm as well as information in their books.

•

A distinguished authoress told us the other evening that governesses have for her an indescribable fascination. She was thinking of Charlotte Brontë (whose Life by Mrs. Gaskell is naturally in our favorite series[2]); but she would be enthralled by another and obscurer lady recently unearthed by Mr. Edward Hall, who edits *Miss Weeton—The Diary of a Governess*. The second volume[3] has just appeared to continue the seething story of this early nineteenth-century feminist whose journal is the only first-hand evidence that has been published of the conditions of life forced upon women of her profession a century ago. "An impressive, original and truly fascinating character," is the general verdict. As *John O'London's Weekly* said, "I could quote with joy, but would rather drive the reader to make Miss Weeton's acquaintance for himself. She is a *Person*."

•

We don't have to remind readers of the *Saturday Review* of "the best short general history of the United States ever published," *The Growth of the American Republic* by Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commager.[4] But you may not yet know Mr. Morison's latest book, *The Second Voyage of Christopher Columbus*,[5] for which the author personally followed Columbus's course to Dominica, Puerto Rico, and Jamaica.

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Analyzing Propaganda

WORLD REVOLUTIONARY PROPAGANDA: A Chicago Study. By Harold D. Lasswell & Dorothy Blumenstock. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1939. $4.50.

Reviewed by Crane Brinton

THE authors have here analyzed the results of their careful study of Communist Party propaganda in Chicago in the five depression years 1930-1934. Professor Lasswell has in earlier books made extensive application to political problems of some of the techniques—and most of the technical terms—of psychology. It is convenient to know from previous acquaintance how he uses these terms, but the careful reader can probably find his way about the book even without previous experience. Certainly Professor Lasswell is conscientious about his definitions, as witness:

> the kinds of predispositions which facilitate the spread of revolutionary propaganda: (1) pre-organized attitudes which are positive with reference to the positive symbols of the propaganda; (2) pre-organized attitudes which are negative with reference to the negative symbols of the propaganda; (3) a high level of insecurity. Insecurity is characterized by dysphoria (uneasiness or discomfort, for example, rather than joy or comfort, which are among the euphoric states).

The authors classify communist propaganda by its channels (demonstrations, publications, organizations, etc.), its technique (slogans, symbols, etc.), its volume (promotions, attention, expenditures). All this they attempt to correlate with a chart of local conditions by quarters of the year, which they call "the balance of indulgence and deprivation." Finally, they summarize the elements of "facilitation" and those of "restriction" in respect to this propaganda, and conclude that "restriction by nationalism," "restriction by individualism," and "restriction by cartharsis" kept the influence of communist agitation in Chicago down to something almost negligible in the total balance of political forces. The last of these "restrictions" should prove especially annoying to American communists. By "catharsis" the authors mean that many of those affected by Chicago communist propaganda simply took out their discontents and tangible grievances in the grand words, gestures, and other releases the communist faith offered them. In other words, Chicago communism, 1930-1934, actually *promoted* social stability in that city. If Professor Lasswell is right, the local chapter of the D. A. R. ought to pass a resolution of thanks to the Communist Party. Without the catharsis (or opiate) of communism, the Chicago unemployed might have got really nasty.

In the last few pages the authors go into predictions as to the possibilities of world revolution. Their actual Chicago material seems, according to rigorous scientific methods, hardly a sufficient basis for such predictions. But on the situation in Chicago their material is abundant, interesting, and often illuminating. And on the whole the uniformities, the generalizations drawn by the authors from their Chicago material, seem sensible. The book is not easy, nor even altogether pleasant to read, chiefly because of the social-scientific jargon in which it is composed. Certainly the authors are not therein especially conspicuous. The most ambitious, daring, and in some ways most valuable writers in the social sciences are in some ways the worst writers. The defect probably goes deeper than mere style, and is somehow related to the confusion, uncertainty, and awkwardness of the present stage of the social sciences. If, as seems likely, these sciences are still in their infancy, we ought not to expect a "Principia" or a "Voyage of the Beagle" from them.

Editions of Horace

QUINTUS HORATIUS FLACCUS: Editions in the United States and Canada as They Appear in the Union Catalog of the Library of Congress. Berkeley: California University Press. 1938. $5.

THAT *monumentum aere perennius* which Horace boldly asserted for himself has been erected, and goes on being erected, with a permanence and continuity that might have amazed the prophet. Horace was born 2003 years ago; the art of printing reached Europe nearly fifteen centuries later, yet this careful compilation lists 2723 entries—all printed books save for a handful of manuscripts (fewer than thirty), and excluding "all commentaries apart from the text, all works about Horace, memorabilia and Horatiana in general, and such separate poems as appear within the published works of others." The volume is an admirable marriage of scholarship and craftsmanship, for the Mills College editorial committee, having performed its task surpassingly well, crowned its achievement by having the book produced by the University of California Press. The result is a distinguished, scholarly, finely-accoutred study.

Yes, this is an advertisement, and a corker!

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

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THE MOOR FIRES MYSTERY *Harriette R. Campbell* (Harpers: $2.)	Poisoning of London derelict and violent deaths of peer and secretary in Scotland strangely linked, as detective Simon Brade discovers.	Consolidation of clues and motives by ivory cube device fascinating—also brilliant writing, likable people, and deeply laid plot.	For connoisseurs

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The New Books

Art

ART HISTORY AND CONNOISSEURSHIP. By W. G. Constable. Macmillan (Cambridge University Press). 1938. $1.50.

In seventy-three pages Mr. Constable defines the field of the art historian, and enumerates methods for determining the period, place of origin, authorship, and historical importance of a given work of art. The author, who is Curator of Paintings at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, thoughtfully if somewhat arbitrarily delimits the sphere of activity proper to the historian of art in relation to those of the philosopher, the archeologist, the connoisseur, and the critic. To such traditional tools as documents, written and oral tradition, and the internal evidence offered by the work itself, he adds the more recently available scientific analysis by means of such instruments as the X-ray and infra-red photography, and estimates their usefulness in providing the raw material upon which critical and historical judgments can be based. The book includes a twenty-page summary of the history of styles in Western European painting. Intelligent laymen will find Mr. Constable's essay as informative as it is concise. O. L.

Fiction

STRAWS IN AMBER. By Naomi Jacob. Macmillan. 1939. $2.50.

Naomi Jacob, being both actress and novelist, is well equipped to write a romance of stage life which makes use of the theater and its people as more than a mere background. The nervous tension of life behind the scenes, the clash of temperament on temperament, and the general attitude compounded partly of real wit and partly of swagger with which these men and women meet a life demanding of them that they be constantly amusing, do much to keep the novel entertaining while the somewhat tenuous story unrolls.

This story concerns the very much star-crossed love of Sally Brightman and Maurice Morris, both born on the same day and in the same London neighborhood but in very different types of family. Each takes a course that leads to success on the stage, Sally becoming a typical English music hall comedienne and Morris the more sensitive comedian whose humor moves always in the shadow of human pathos. In their various meetings and partings, the book becomes a saga of unsuccessful love. Instead of being humanely on the side of her lovers, Miss Jacobs seems to take a perverse plot-prolonging delight in inventing circumstance after circumstance to keep them apart. One comes to feel that it is not fate but the author that is mainly responsible for stretching their emotional distress over so many years. Thus in the end Miss Jacobs inverts the relation between the real and theatrical: the life of her characters in the theater is real—except occasionally when the demands of the plot intrude—while their life in the "real world" outside remains on a theatrical level. G. G.

SUMMER OF GOOD HOPE. By Georgiana Philips. Putnams. 1939. $2.50.

Quick and amusing, Mrs. Philips's novel is also a subtle picture of the difficult, vulnerable, and uneasy life of a divorced woman with children. Caroline Henry is represented to us as young, attractive, intelligent, responsible, warm-hearted; we see her good reasons for divorcing her husband; we understand how hard she is trying to do well by her children; and how much they love her; and yet her life and therefore theirs is unsatisfactory. She cannot help shifting some of the burden which she would normally have shared with her husband upon the shoulders of Rosalind, through whose nine-year-old mind we see the story.

The children are affectionately and humorously drawn; their anxiety is real and touching. No one else in the book, however, quite measures up to them. The beloved Caroline, who should be the most sympathetic figure of all, has fallen into the pit that awaits conscientious full-time mothers: obliged to be an authority to her children, she has gradually set herself up as an authority to everybody. Gently and tolerantly, she puts everyone right on all questions.

Nevertheless, anyone who likes to read about children, and many who do not, will enjoy Mrs. Philips's spirited story. K. S.

SNOW-WATER. By Dorothy Gardiner. Doubleday, Doran. 1939. $2.50.

The men who built the West had reckless and exacting imaginations. They wanted monuments of comparable size to celebrate their fame. Nothing less than a town to which his name was given would satisfy Daniel Bartor. He invested his personal fortune in the enterprise which had the mountain-shadowed plains of Colorado as its setting.

Fortunately for his community, this

(*Continued on next page*)

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 257)

PETER PINDAR—
TO THE CRITICS

Rake, if you please, the kennel of your brains,
And pour forth all the loaded head contains;
I shall not suffer by it, I am sure:—
Nay, my poetic plants will better thrive,
Exalt their heads and smile—be all alive
As *mud* is very excellent manure.

HOLT.HOLT.HOLT.HOLT.HOLT.HOLT.HOLT.HOLT.HOLT.HOLT.HOLT.HOLT.HOLT.HOLT.HOLT.HOLT.HOLT.H

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Remember the Maine

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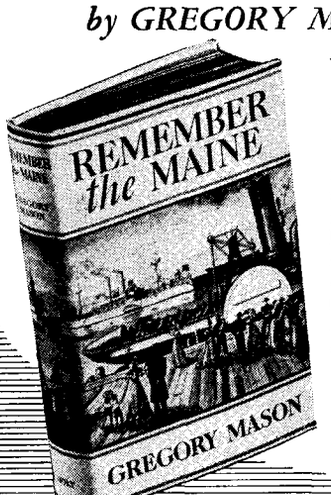

WHAT a year! What a war! *What a book!*...Here's a devastating check-up on history, formal and informal. Look on page 89 for the story of the General who was carried to war on a door . . . On page 18 for Roosevelt's orders to Dewey, which set us on the road to empire...On pages 279-280 for the letter which reveals that the whole business may have been a mistake . . . And anywhere else in the book for hundreds of rapid-fire stories of an amazing era that was both gallant and funny, brave and absurd. It captures the spirit of our nation just as it came of age.

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At the Sign of the Phoenix

☞P. E. G. Quercus' favorite bird must be the phoenix.

☞Let us explain. The phoenix you see above is the emblem of the Facsimile Text Society, and Quercus says that in the spring "our favorite publisher is always the FACSIMILE TEXT SOCIETY, which issues such delicious replicas of famous rarities at miniscule price."

☞Quercus may well be happy again, for the appearance of the phoenix in *The Saturady Review* at this time announces the publication of a new group of facsimile books. They are:

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Justa Edovardo King

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The Coquette

A reproduction of one of the earliest (1797) American fiction best-sellers, by Hannah Webster Foster. Introduction by Herbert Ross Brown. $2.60

☞These are only three of the forty-seven "delicious replicas" which the Society has published. Among the others are such volumes as: *Sonnets* (1609), by William Shakespeare; *Poems* (1820), by John Keats; *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge; *Poems* (1831), by Edgar Allan Poe.

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The New Books

(*Continued from preceding page*)

strong-minded, cursing, bullying, upright man had real vision. He knew that irrigation would reclaim the land for cultivation. Defying the stubborn, stupid opposition of fellow-townsmen, he insisted on digging a ditch to carry into the valley the melting mountain snows. The myopia of selfish men threatened constantly to defeat his purpose. But Daniel, behaving with the resolute conviction of a benevolent despot, had his way in every crisis.

Miss Gardiner means to present this man as the best type of rugged individualist. In dramatizing his incorruptible integrity and his singleness of purpose she has a considerable success. It is a misfortune, therefore, that she has allowed her attention to be diverted from Daniel far too frequently. He wanders like an aloof and angry ghost through the pages which have to do with village scandal and village comedy, lacking any essential identification with these frivolous happenings. His relationship even with his wife is vague, yet her childish and trivial inconstancy is allowed to distract the reader again and again in the course of the story.

Much the best of the book is to be found in the long opening section dealing with the period of struggle between 1868 and 1871. Miss Gardiner had an appealing glimpse of a significant American story. She lost it when she allowed her good central character to stamp off into the background, his angry vigor dwindling into mere sulkiness.

J. G.

PITY OF THE WORLD. By Elinor Mordaunt. Greystone Press. 1939. $2.

The world would have lost very little if Miss Mordaunt's novel of an English family in Africa had never been written. As a study of human relationships it is regrettably lacking in ordinary common sense. As a plain piece of writing it is heavy-footed and obscure. In our tiresome search for some quality of virtue, we are forced to fall back upon the occasional descriptions of wild animals gathered about a waterhole, and the recognition of familiar names of flora and fauna.

R. S.

JUSTLY DEAR: Charles and Mary Lamb. By E. Thornton Cook. Scribners. 1939. $2.50.

With this novel of Charles and Mary Lamb, E. Thornton Cook adds another to his list of biographical fiction dealing with literary England. The wise and witty circle that surrounded the Lambs wherever they might be living in London is certainly an ideal one for entertaining portrayal. What a roster of names it was—William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Keats, Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, and the others. They came and they wrote and they talked.

The book is written in a pleasant, gentle strain which mutes the tragic note and a little over-crescendos the gay. Mr. Cook never falsifies his story, but he does present the brighter side of it. The darkness and despair into which every one of these men sank recurrently are nowhere evident. From evenings of whist, of passionate debate with Lamb's stammer paradoxically helping his argument, and his bright, perverse wit attacking from every side at once, Elia stands out as whole and individual in his gentleness and humor, devoted entirely to the sister whose whole life grew out of his.

There is little story in the novel, and no plot save the slight one suggested by the comings and goings of Fanny Kelly, the actress, whom both the Lambs loved. And for *leitmotif* there is the tragic absence of Mary when Charles met all visitors with the phrase they came to know so well, "Mary is fr-from home." Mr. Cook's intimate recreation of the period suggests itself as an excellent introduction for younger readers.

G. G.

History

REMEMBER THE MAINE. By Gregory Mason. Holt. 1939. $3.

The book opens by telling how the news of the *Maine* explosion was received in a Boston household, recaptures much of the surrounding conversation and some of the then existing emotion, and from that point rambles on into an informal history of the Spanish War. A good deal of attention is devoted to the difference between the actual course of events and the stories of the newspaper correspondents, and quite a bit to the correspondents themselves. The narrative is interrupted at va-

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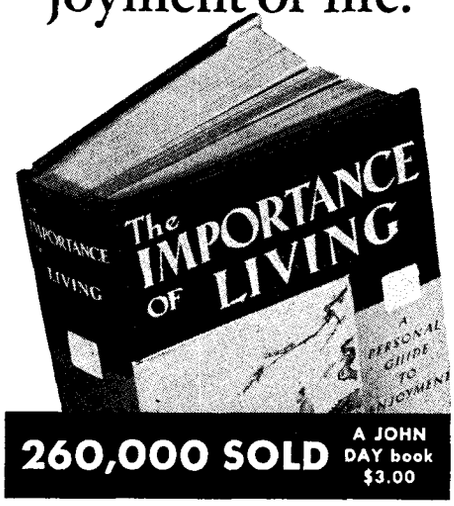

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rious points to let us know successively what the author thinks of Theodore Roosevelt (that he was an ambitious adolescent); about the Sampson-Schley controversy (that it was silly); the papers of the period (that they were yellow), and various other matters tangent to the main theme. It presents little that will be new to most readers save perhaps the well documented opinion that so far from being the chief promoter of the war "big business" tried to stop it.

All told it is a work which reads easily, but would read better if "The Mauve Decade" and "The Martial Spirit" had not been written. It describes the progress of the burlesque and tragic conflict in a manner reminiscent of the latter, and annotates this account with running comment on handlebar moustaches and bicycles built for two after the style of the former; and it is written with something less than the skill of either.

F. P.

Miscellaneous

AMERICAN BOOK-PRICES CURRENT 1937-1938. Compiled by Mary Houston Warren. 750 copies. New York: R. R. Bowker Company. 1938. $11.

This is the final issue of this essential manual to be edited by Miss Warren, who has retired after compiling the serial volumes since 1925. What a fourteen years of book prices it has been—prices current, rampant, and dormant! But a copy of the first issue of "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" sold for $300 last March, and all is not yet lost. Meanwhile, so long as books sell at a premium over published price, this series will continue to be a must for collectors, booksellers, and librarians. Lacking it, they are merely so many troops of Boy Scouts stranded in the middle of nowhere without compasses.

J. T. W.

CIVILIZATION AGAINST CANCER. By Clarence Cook Little. Farrar & Rinehart. 1939. $1.50.

Dr. Little is eminently qualified to write on cancer, being Managing Director of the American Society for the Control of Cancer, and head of the Jackson Memorial Laboratory at Ben Harbor.

Dr. Little knows his subject. There is no gainsaying that. But he has yet to learn that the English language may be as tricky, if not as unpredictable, as the human body. He has apparently attempted to give the non-medical reader who may be concerned with cancer as a potential danger, a reassuring and informative guide as well as an equally reassuring statement of what is being done to lessen the incidence of the disease. In this he has not succeeded. A careful reading of the book gives the impression that the seeker for knowledge will find his confusion increased rather than lessened by it. Chapter 3 is entitled "What is Cancer?" Needless to say Dr. Little does not answer the question and the lay reader is bound to find what he does say hard to follow.

There is not space here to give instances of Dr. Little's inability to say exactly what he means, but it must be said with regret that that inability destroys any value the book may have hoped to have as a hand held out to the actual and the possible sufferer.

Quite apart from Dr. Little's confusing language, it is certain that many sufferers from cancer will not take in very good part the somewhat glib suggestion that periodic health examinations and medical care are a part of the program for cancer control. Obviously they must be. But no statistical method has yet been devised which is capable of limiting the incidence of cancer to those who can afford such luxuries. And surely Dr. Little will not contend that existing arrangements for clinical attention are adequate.

R. H.

Travel

WILDERNESS WIFE. By Kathrene Pinkerton. Carrick & Evans. 1939. $2.75.

Not since Elizabeth Forrest's "Daylight Moon" have we had a book of homely adventure quite like this one, without dramatics and yet with the feeling of fiction in its narrative ease and architecture. The women explorers write manfully of strange parts, and the dilettante débutantes emit tours in print. This is a humbler tale, for Kathrene Pinkerton and her husband were obliged by illness and poverty to leave their city jobs and spend nearly five years completely isolated in the woods of northern Canada. He had some knowledge of bush life; she could not even cook when they first entered the wilderness, yet they managed to build an excellent cabin and to live prosperously on the land until, in the second year, their stories began to sell.

Mrs. Pinkerton was no pioneer amazon. She had a fine, feminine interest in keeping a comfortable home and turning the drudgery of cooking into a game of discovery among recalcitrant victuals, and the achievement of the fireplace was a feminine conquest. She writes intelli-

(*Continued on next page*)

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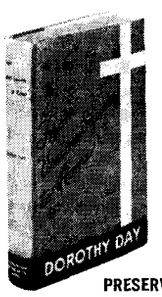

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The New Books

(Continued from preceding page)

gently and excitingly of the animals with which they were surrounded, the "psychopathic" dogs, the gymnastic otter, the wolves, the ermine that nearly got her baby, and the skunk that could, for a whim, have made their cabin untenable in freezing weather. This is an exceptional book of travel and of practicable philosophy bound into one.

H. D.

SEEN IN THE HADHRAMAUT. By Freya Stark. Dutton. 1939. $5.

This book by Freya Stark, whose Persian books have been so widely praised, is not a travel narrative but a set of magnificent photographs with liberal annotation. The pictures are of those mysterious cities in inner Arabia which, as she says, have existed for some two thousand years with little change except that they have slowly sunk from their ancient prosperity. Here are many soaring skyscrapers of which some pictures have already been published by the few travelers who have been able to reach them, and many very interesting photographs of natives and native scenes in a region perhaps as little touched by the outside world as any place anywhere.

H. S. C.

PERSONALS

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GENERAL

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THE MARK TWAIN SOCIETY has just published a fully annotated, admirably printed, edition of Twain's 1601. Edition limited. Price $6.00. Descriptive circular on request. THE ARGUS BOOK SHOP, INC., 333 S. Dearborn St., Chicago, Illinois.

Double-Crostics: No. 258

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

1-W	2-J	3-N	4-S	5-X	6-V	7-M	8-C	9-T		10-D	11-T	12-N	13-W	14-M	15-G	16-C	17-S
18-H	19-E		20-F	21-R	22-I		23-L	24-T		25-R	26-A	27-I	28-O		29-L	30-T	
31-Y	32-B	33-Q		34-K	35-Q	36-I		37-S	38-C	39-O	40-P		41-O	42-R	43-K	44-F	
45-D	46-M	47-R	48-N	49-J	50-U	51-X	52-P		53-J	54-V	55-G	56-S	57-C	58-F	59-M	60-L	
61-W	62-O	63-A	64-S	65-P	66-G	67-Y		68-F	69-Q	70-I	71-P		72-R	73-K		74-I	75-A
76-B		77-C	78-K	79-X	80-G		81-M	82-Y	83-L	84-X	85-J		86-F	87-A		88-K	89-D
90-N	91-O	92-V	93-T	94-Q		95-B		96-R	97-S	98-T	99-G	100-J	101-C	102-V		103-H	104-K
105-O	106-L		107-G	108-X		109-E	110-K		111-T	112-N	113-B	114-A	115-P	116-M	117-F	118-C	
119-F	120-B	121-Q		122-U	123-A	124-W	125-T		126-C	127-E	128-W	129-Q	130-X		131-Q	132-H	133-B
	134-D	135-S	136-N	137-V	138-M	139-X	140-H	141-T	142-C		143-U	144-O	145-R	146-E	147-M	148-L	149-H
150-B	151-W		152-J	153-S	154-P	155-V	156-I		157-Q	158-L	159-I		160-W	161-X	162-Y		163-K
164-A		165-D	166-V	167-U	168-Y	169-W	170-N	171-G	172-K	173-I	174-H	175-B		176-L	177-I		178-G
179-L	180-J		181-E	182-R	183-V	184-Q		185-F	186-U	187-D	188-S	189-G					

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle, you must guess twenty-five words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 19 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Collaborator with Conrad.

B. Good spirit.

C. Incubus.

D. Rests with confidence.

E. Long, mournful cries.

F. Heroine of "Middlemarch."

G. Calumny.

H. Nimble, light and quick.

I. Badly put together; crude.

J. Nonconformity.

K. Inhabitants of Virginia, east of the Blue Ridge.

L. Prehistoric civilization of Central Europe.

M. Surpass in daring.

N. Fidgeting about.

O. Right feeling.

P. Spirit in "Henry VI," Pt. 2.

Q. Land of the giants (Norse).

R. Two-faced.

S. By-product.

T. Completeness.

U. Arrays (verb).

V. Denial of existence of reality.

W. Patronage.

X. Richly fragrant or sweet.

Y. Foolishly sentimental (slang).

WORDS

75 26 123 164 87 114 63

150 120 133 95 76 113 32 175

16 38 57 126 8 77 101 118 142

10 89 45 165 187 134

19 127 109 181 146

185 86 44 119 68 58 117 20

171 107 66 15 99 189 178 55 80

149 174 18 140 132 103

173 36 27 177 156 22 70 74 159

152 49 2 180 85 100 53

172 43 34 88 78 104 163 110 73

158 29 148 83 60 176 23 179 106

46 138 59 116 14 7 81 147

170 90 3 48 136 12 112

62 144 91 105 39 28 41

154 71 115 65 52 40

33 184 94 131 121 157 69 35 129

96 182 21 72 47 42 145 25

4 56 17 188 153 97 37 135 64

98 141 125 9 111 93 11 30 24

186 143 122 50 167

166 6 54 155 102 92 183 137

1 128 124 61 169 160 13 151

139 161 51 5 79 108 84 130

67 82 168 162 31

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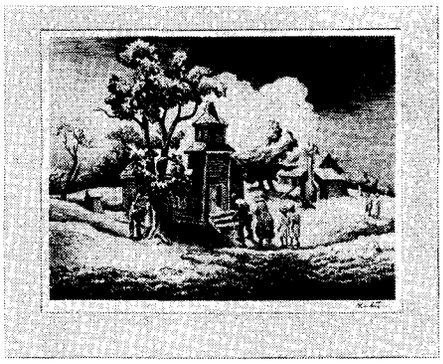

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Gordon Grant
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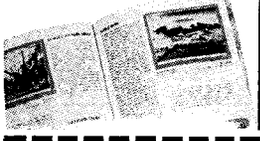
Irwin Hoffman
Doris Lee
Charles Locke
Luigi Lucioni
Raphael Soyer
Eugene Higgins
Grant Wood



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Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

OLD Q feels sombre: he is girding his coins for the Income Tax. ☞Among the Spring Poems that have already reached us, favorite so far is

Morning Incense

I like the smell of bacon
That rises from the skillet;
That wanders over all the house
And tries, I think, to fill it.

LAWRENCE W. LAWSON.

☞In *The English Journal* (February) Charles L. Swick of Saratoga Springs High School reports interestingly on the experiences of his English III Class in studying publishers' blurbs. As the class was unfamiliar with the term *blurb*, letters were written to eight publishers for information and the replies were discussed by the students. ☞Among them we chuckle a little at what was innocently said by Mr. McKaughan of Reynal and Hitchcock:—"You can readily see that there is absolutely nothing to it. In a way, blurb writing is a distant cousin of reviewing, except that the advertising copy slant is introduced with as much finesse as possible, in order that the blurb reader can be inoculated painlessly with an overwhelming desire to own the book in question." ☞Mr. McKaughan was too demure. There's a devil of a lot to it. ☞One of the most intelligible and pleasurable pieces of promotion this season is the special illustrated issue of *Harcourt Brace News* issued in honor of Dorothy Canfield's new novel *Seasoned Timber*. The friendship between Dorothy Canfield Fisher and her publishers is an old one: both her Harcourt and her Brace were college class mates of her husband, Dr. John R. Fisher, at Columbia. ☞In his introduction to the Facsimile Text Society's replica of the 1855 *Leaves of Grass*, Clifton J. Furness makes the suggestion (first offered by the learned bookseller Alfred Goldsmith) that Walt Whitman borrowed the binding format from *Fern Leaves from Fanny's Portfolio* (1853) by his friend "Fanny Fern." ☞We were much struck by Olin Downes' *(New York Times)* report on the Concord Sonata by Charles Ives, played recently at the Town Hall by John Kirkpatrick, pianist. ☞The Sonata, Mr. Downes says, is in four movements, entitled *Emerson, Hawthorne, The Alcotts,* and *Thoreau*. The composer calls it "an attempt to present one person's impression of the spirit of transcendentalism associated in the minds of many with Concord, Mass., of over half a century ago." ☞Among other compositions of Mr. Ives was a musical setting for Vachel Lindsay's *General William Booth Enters Into Heaven*. ☞It amused sardonic Old Q. to learn from the Argus Bookshop, Chicago, that there is now a "Variorum Edition" of Mark Twain's *1601*, edited by Franklin J. Meine. ☞Old Ben Abramson, equally sardonic, remarks in his circular that "for purity of text, this volume is unapproachable." ☞There are 44 known editions of this behind-the-barn classic. ☞What sounds like a good buy is the first English edition of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902) listed at $3 by Norman Alexander Hall, 67 Union St., Newton Center, Mass. ☞We were happy to learn from Appleton-Century that Cornelius Weygandt's delightful *Philadelphia Folks* has gone into a second printing. As an ex-Philadelphian himself, Old Q. reserves the right to chaff the old town, but its essential heart is big and agglutinative as its own Cinnamon Bun (to which Dr. Weygandt devotes an agreeable essay).

☞E. D. Branch, answering an inquiry here some time ago, kindly reports that all the facts *re* H. L. Mencken's famous spoof about Bathtubs in Philadelphia are expounded by Vilhjalmur Stefansson in chapter 8 of his excellent book *Adventures in Error* (McBride, 1936). ☞Howard Swiggett writes that Baker Street Irregulars must not forget other irregular events that happened on that same highway. He says that the plot to assassinate Napoleon which resulted in the execution of the Duke of Enghien was hatched in 1803 at 46 Baker Street.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THE CASE OF THE PERJURED PARROT *Erle Stanley Gardner* (Morrow: $2.)	Squawk of murdered millionaire's pet parrot almost hangs probably bigamous bride, but P. Mason dissects an alibi.	Lighter in vein—though not in weight — than Mason *chroniques*. Otherwise has all w.k. virtues of this brand.	Grade A
PULPIT IN THE GRILL ROOM *E. Phillips Oppenheim* (Little, Brown: $2.)	Short stories of intrigue and crime, with crippled London restaurateur as master-mind.	Tenuous tales of pale people, with not much plot or point to any of them.	Gossamer
MURDER UNDER CONSTRUCTION *Sue Mac Veigh* (Houghton Mifflin: $2.)	Head engineer on faulty bridge project has head bashed in. Capt. Andy MacVeigh, and wife, Susan, snoop hard and successfully.	Murder device exceptionally ingenious and entirely in character. Sleuth, spouse, and high-tensioned engineer capitally drawn.	Very good

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